



**FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION**

**ROY WILKINS**

**PART 10 OF 11**

**BUFILE: 62-78270**

Section 10

RECORDED

INDEXED

90-1359-1

(b)(7)(e)

November 16, 1937

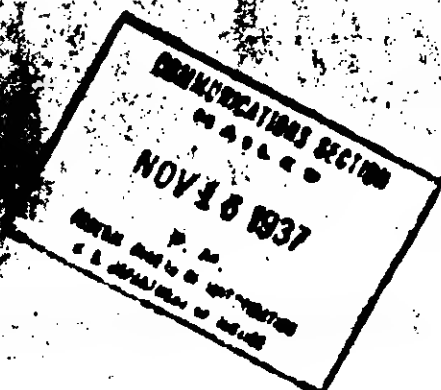
MEMORANDUM FOR ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL E. J. HANCOCK

This will acknowledge receipt of your memorandum dated November 13, 1937, transmitting a photostatic copy of a letter to the Attorney General from Mr. Ray Wilkins, Assistant Secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, New York, New York dated November 11, 1937, relative to an alleged violation of the Peonage Statute at Malley, Arkansas.

This matter has been referred to the Little Rock, Arkansas Office of this Bureau for investigation, and you will be appropriately advised of all developments in this case.

Very truly yours,

John Edgar Hoover,  
Director.



(b)(7)(e)

RECORDED  
4 90-1379-2  
INDEXED

November 16, 1937

90-1379

Special Agent in Charge,  
Little Rock, Arkansas.

Dear Sir:

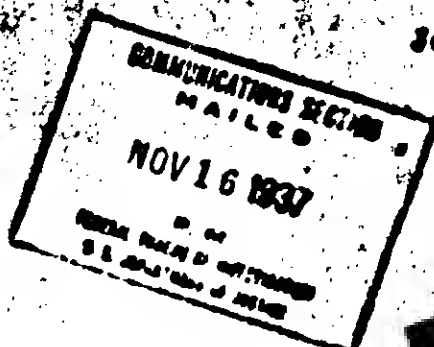
Attached hereto are copies of a letter dated November 11, 1937 received by the Attorney General from Mr. Ray Wilkins, Assistant Secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, New York City, wherein it is stated that thirty negroes are being held virtually as slaves in a stockade at Malley, Arkansas, and are being worked at the point of guns.

You are requested to conduct a discreet investigation relative to Mr. Wilkins' allegations to determine whether a violation of the Peonage Statute is involved herein.

This matter should be placed in line for prompt investigative attention, and a report should be submitted to the Bureau at the earliest possible date.

Very truly yours,

John Edgar Hoover,  
Director.



167X

January 5, 1938.

60-1359

Special Agent in Charge,  
Little Rock, Arkansas.

RE:

UNKNOWN SUBJECTS;  
ROY WILKINS; COMPLAINT;  
FUGITIVE.

Dear Sir:

The Bureau file in the above entitled case indicates that this case is not receiving prompt investigative attention in your division.

This matter should be placed in line for early investigative attention and you should submit a report to the Bureau at the earliest possible date.

Very truly yours,

J. E. Hoover

John Edgar Hoover,

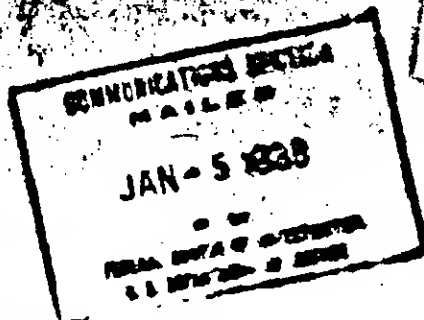
Director.

RECORDED

50-1359-2

JAN 11 1938

FILE



Federal Bureau of Investigation  
United States Department of Justice  
Post Office Box 1469  
Little Rock, Arkansas  
January 13, 1938

Director  
Federal Bureau of Investigation  
Washington, D. C.

RE: UNKNOWN SUBJECTS;  
ROY WILLIAMS; COMPLAINANT;  
FUGITIVE.

Dear Sir:

Reference is made to Bureau communication of January 5, 1938 (60-1359), which instructs that this matter be given prompt investigative attention.

The failure to give this matter attention at an earlier date has been due to the fact that the agent to whom the case has been assigned has been unable to proceed with the investigation due to other matters which he has been handling elsewhere. This matter will be given attention at the earliest possible date.

Very truly yours,

*Clarence Fletcher*  
CLARENCE FLETCHER,  
Special Agent in Charge.

RECORDED

50-1359-3

JAN 17 1938

Post Office Box 1400  
Little Rock, Arkansas  
January 29, 1937

Special Agent in Charge  
New York, New York

RE: FREDERICK S. JONES;  
ROBERT WILKINS, COMPLAINT;  
FUGITIVE.

Dear Sir:

Under date of November 11, 1937, Mr. Roy Wilkins, Assistant Secretary of the National Association for Advancement of Colored People, 60 Fifth Avenue, New York City, addressed a communication to the Attorney General, in which he advises that thirty negroes are being held virtually as slaves in a stockade at Halley, Arkansas, and are being worked at the point of guns. It is stated in this letter that the information has been relayed to Mr. Wilkins by way of Chicago, Illinois, and he urges an immediate investigation of this situation at Halley.

For your information, several complaints have been received through the above named Association, one particularly in which I refer is a complaint made by [redacted] Memphis, Tennessee, who, on July 12, 1937, addressed a letter to the Department of Justice, in Washington, complaining of the fact that three negro boys who were residents of Memphis, had been detained at Halley, Arkansas, on a plantation of one [redacted]. For your complete information, I am forwarding a copy of this communication, together with the report of Special Agent [redacted] dated at Memphis, Tennessee, September 24, 1937, entitled [redacted], which sets forth an interview with [redacted] and furnishes information to the effect that the victims, [redacted] all colored, were at that time residing in Chicago and New York City.

Special Agent [redacted] of this office, conducted investigation in connection with this matter, same being reflected in his report rendered in connection with the above mentioned case and dated [redacted], 1937, copy of which report is furnished for your information.

The matter was presented in its entirety to the United States Attorney, at Little Rock, on December 2, 1937, at which time prosecution was declined, in view of the fact that the Fugitive Statute, in the opinion of the United States Attorney, had not been violated.

It appears that there is a possibility that the [redacted] complaint is based upon information which is an outgrowth of the case entitled [redacted] and it is for this reason that [redacted]

50-1359-3X  
ONE

Special Agent in Charge  
New York, New York

January 17, 1938

The matter is being referred to your office, with the request that Mr. Wilkins be interviewed and that full and complete information be obtained from him concerning the thirty persons, or at least a few of them, who are being held at Halley, Arkansas. In order that the investigation may be brought to a logical conclusion. At the present time, appropriate inquiry is being made by agents of this office at Halley, Arkansas, particularly of

It is further desired that you ascertain from Mr. Wilkins the sources of his information, in order that the complainants may be interviewed.

Very truly yours,

CLARENCE FLETCHER,  
Special Agent in Charge.



# FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Form No. 1  
THIS CASE ORIGINATED AT

Little Rock, Ark.

N.Y.

FILED

20-6

2K

REPORT MADE AT <b>NEW YORK CITY</b>	DATE WHEN MADE <b>2/1/38</b>	PERIOD FOR WHICH MADE <b>1/27, 29, 31/38</b>	REPORT MADE BY <div style="background-color: black; width: 100px; height: 1.2em; display: inline-block;"></div> <b>b5/c</b>
TITLE <b>UNKNOWN SUBJECTS; BOY WILKINS - COMPLAINANT</b>			CHARACTER OF CASE <b>PEONAGE</b>
SYNOPSIS OF FACTS:  <div style="text-align: center; padding: 10px;"> <p>Boy Wilkies, National Association for Advancement of Colored People, advised his information relative to alleged violation of Peonage Statute at Halley, Arkansas obtained from his Association's representative in Chicago and no information about persons held yet received.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">R. U. C.</p> </div>			
<p><u>REFERENCE:</u> Letter from Little Rock Office dated January 17, 1938.</p>			
<p><u>DETAILS:</u> <span style="float: right;"><u>AT NEW YORK CITY</u></span></p> <p>BOY WILKIES, (colored), Assistant Secretary of the National Association for Advancement of Colored People, 69 Fifth Avenue, New York City, was interviewed by the writer relative to the communication addressed to the Attorney General under date of November 11, 1937, in which he advised that thirty negroes were being held, virtually as slaves, in a stockade at Halley, Arkansas, and are being worked at the point of guns. Wilkins indicated in his letter that the information had been relayed to him by way of Chicago, Ill.</p>			
COPIES OF THIS REPORT		DO NOT WRITE IN THESE SPACES	
1 - Bureau 2 - Little Rock 2 - Chicago 2 - New York		<div style="font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">501359</div> <div style="font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">4</div> <div style="font-size: 1.5em; font-weight: bold;">FEB - 4 AM.</div> <div style="font-size: 1.2em; font-weight: bold;">FEB 7 1938</div>	

50-3.

At the time of the writer's interview with Mr. Wilkins, he stated that the only information he had relative to the alleged violation of the Peonage Statute at Halley, Arkansas, was contained in a telegram addressed to Attorney CHARLES E. HOUSTON, of the Association, at 69 Fifth Avenue, New York City, from GEORGE A. BLAKEY, the Chicago representative of the Association. He exhibited the telegram to the writer which is being set forth at this point for ready reference:

November 10, 1937

Attorney Charles E. Houston,  
69 Fifth Avenue  
New York City

[REDACTED] TOGETHER WITH THIRTY OTHER  
NEGROES SOLD AND HELD SLAVES IN STOCKADE  
AT HALLEY ARKANSAS EXPECT AT POINT OF GUNS  
HAVE FEDERAL OFFICERS INVESTIGATE AT ONCE  
EXTREME CAUTION OF UTMOST IMPORTANCE TO  
PROTECT PRISONERS LIVES [REDACTED] (b)(7)(C); (b)

(signed) George A. Blakely  
Chicago Branch N.A.A.C.P.,  
Room 215, 345 State St.,  
Chicago, Ill.

As indicated in the above mentioned communication to the Attorney General, Wilkins stated that he had no information as to the names of the negroes allegedly held in peonage aside from the [REDACTED] mentioned in the telegram, and he suggested that agents of the Bureau interview George A. Blakely at Chicago, Illinois for more detailed information. (b)(7)(C)

He indicated at this time that he had no information about the alleged violation of the Peonage Statute involving negroes [REDACTED] from Memphis, Tenn., in DeWitt County at [REDACTED], Arkansas, in June 1937, as reflected in the reports of Special Agent [REDACTED] dated at Little Rock, Arkansas, dated December 1, 1937, and Special Agent [REDACTED], dated at Memphis, Tenn., September 24, 1937. (b)(7)(C)

50-3.

6582 (1)  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] is being, or has been, interviewed by agents of the Little Rock Office at [REDACTED] with reference to this matter.

UNDEVELOPED LEADS:

CHICAGO OFFICE:

At Chicago, Ill. - Will interview GEORGE A. HARRY, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Room 213, 34<sup>th</sup> South State Street, for detailed information relative to the alleged violation of the Peonage Statute, as contained in his telegram to the New York office of the Association, dated November 10, 1937, as set out in the body of this report.

The names and addresses of the negroes allegedly held, together with the details surrounding their arrest, should be obtained.

REFERRED UPON COMPLETION TO OFFICE OF ORIGIN.

March 1, 1938

██████████ (b)(7)(c)  
50-1359

Special Agent in Charge,  
Little Rock, Arkansas.

RE: UNKNOWN SUBJECTS;  
BOY KIDNAP - COMPLAINANT;  
FUGITIVE.

Dear Sir:

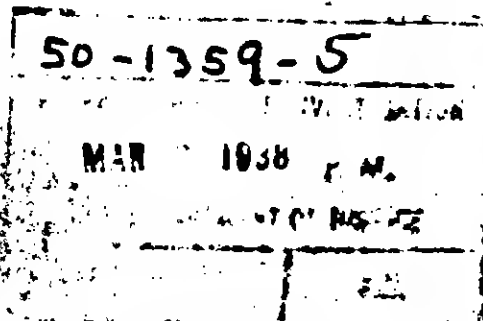
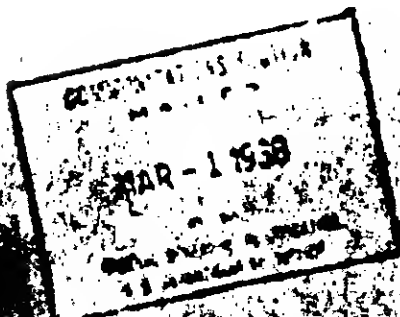
The Bureau file in the above entitled case indicates that this case is not receiving prompt investigative attention in your division.

This matter should be placed in line for early investigative attention and you should submit a report to the Bureau at the earliest possible date.

Very truly yours,

J. E. Hoover

John Edgar Hoover,  
Director.



Sp. L. E.

CLASS OF SERVICE DESIRED	
DOMESTIC	FOREIGN
TELEGRAM	FULL RATE
DAY LETTER	DAY LETTER
NIGHT MESSAGE	NIGHT MESSAGE
NIGHT LETTER	NIGHT LETTER
CABLE	CABLE
CABLE MESSAGE	CABLE MESSAGE

NOTE: SHOULD CHECK CLASS OF SERVICE DESIRED BY ADDING MESSAGE WILL BE TRANSMITTED AS A FULL-RATE MESSAGE

# Postal Telegraph

THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM



RECEIVER'S NUMBER
CHECK
TIME FILED
STANDARD TIME

Send the following message, subject to the terms on back hereof, which are hereby agreed to

FBI LITTLE ROCK, ARK. MAY 7, 1938 1:20 PM

D. W. LADD  
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION  
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE  
1900 BANKERS BUILDING  
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

URSUS RAY WILKINS COMPLAINT PRONAGE DISCONTINUE CASE CLOSED

FLETCHER

OFFICIAL BUSINESS  
GOVERNMENT RATE  
CHARGE - FBI LITTLE ROCK

50-1324-

MAY 10 1938

ONE

# FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Form No. 1  
THIS CASE ORIGINATED AT

LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS

FILE NO.

100-10

REPORT MADE AT <b>LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS</b>	DATE WHEN MADE <b>5-6-38</b>	PERIOD FOR WHICH MADE <b>4-28, 4-3-38</b>	REPORT MADE BY <div style="background-color: black; height: 20px; width: 100%;"></div>
TITLE <b>THEODORE STROUDS; WILLIAMS - C. CLAIMANT</b>			CHARACTER OF CASE <b>REBAGGE</b>

**SYNOPSIS OF FACTS:**

No evidence uncovered to indicate complaint by National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, New York, New York, that thirty negroes are being held virtually as slaves in a stockade at Halley, Arkansas, and worked at the point of [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] United States Attorney at Little Rock, declined prosecution, May 3, 1938.

- 3 -

**REFERENCE:**

Bureau letter dated November 16, 1937.

Report of Special Agent [REDACTED] New York City, dated February 1, 1938.

**DETAILS:**

This investigation is predicated upon a letter received by the Attorney General from Mr. ROY WILLIAMS, Assistant Secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, New York City, dated November 11, 1937, in which it was stated that thirty negroes were being held virtually as slaves in a stockade at Halley, Arkansas, and were

DO NOT WRITE IN THESE SPACES	
<p style="font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">60-11359-6</p>	<p style="font-size: 1.5em; font-weight: bold;">MAY 10 1938</p>
<p>COPIES OF THIS REPORT:</p> <p>1 - New York City</p> <p>1 - Bureau</p> <p>1 - Little Rock (2 enclosures)</p> <p>1 - Little Rock</p>	
<p style="font-size: 1.2em; font-weight: bold;">MAY 12 1938</p>	

been worked at the point of [REDACTED]

(b)(1)(b)

This letter was referred by the Attorney General to  
the Bureau for appropriate investigation.

[REDACTED]

(b)(1)(b)

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

6570/10

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

These facts were discussed on May 3, 1938 with the United States Attorney, Fred A. Iegris, at Little Rock, Arkansas, who stated that there is no indication of any violation of the Peonage Statute; that the county work farm at Halley, Arkansas was a regular detention farm for prisoners, and as long as the prisoners were formally charged and sentenced in the Court of Law they were lawfully detained; that since there was no indication that any negroes were being unlawfully detained at Halley, Arkansas, prosecution would not be authorized in this case.

**ENCLOSURES:**

**TO THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY, LITTLE ROCK:**

Letter dated November 22, 1937 from Eliot McMahon, Assistant Attorney General, Department of Justice, Washington, D. C. to FRED A. IEGRIS, United States Attorney, Little Rock, Arkansas.



ENCLOSURES: (Cont.)

TO THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY, LITTLE ROCK:

Photostatic copy of letter dated November 11, 1987 from ROY WILKINS, Assistant Secretary, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, New York City, New York to the Attorney General at Washington, D. C.

C L O S E D

65-1359-6

May 14, 1938

MEMORANDUM FOR ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL HOLMES

Re: UNKNOWN SUBJECTS  
ROY WILKINS - Complainant  
PEONAGE

Reference is made to my memorandum of November 16, 1937, acknowledging the receipt of your memorandum dated November 13, 1937, relative to an alleged violation of the Peonage Statute at Bailey, Arkansas, reported to the Attorney General by Mr. Roy Wilkins, Assistant Secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, New York, New York.

Please be advised that investigation of this matter has been completed by the Little Rock, Arkansas, office of this Bureau, with the result that it has been ascertained that no factual basis exists for the allegations made.

A copy of the report of Special Agent [redacted] dated at Little Rock, Arkansas, May 6, 1938, reporting the closing of this investigation, has already been furnished to you.

Very truly yours,

John Edgar Hoover,  
Director.

COMMUNICATIONS SECTION  
MAILED

MAY 16 1938

P. M.  
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION  
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

# FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Form No. 1  
THIS CASE ORIGINATED AT **LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS**

FILE NO. **50-5**

REPORT MADE AT <b>Chicago, Ill.</b>	DATE WHEN MADE <b>5/16/38</b>	PERIOD FOR WHICH MADE <b>4/22, 23/38</b>	REPORT MADE BY <b>[REDACTED] (b)(7)(C)</b>
TITLE <b>UNKNOWN SUBJECTS; ROY WILKINS - COMPLAINANT</b>			CHARACTER OF CASE <b>PEONAGE</b>
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 25%;">SYNOPSIS OF FACTS</div> <div style="width: 75%;"> <p><b>GEORGE A. BLANEY, Chicago, informed had no information</b></p> <p><b>[REDACTED]</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>R.U.C.</b></p> <p><b>REFERENCE:</b> Report of Special Agent <b>[REDACTED]</b> New York City, dated 2/1/38.</p> <p><b>DETAILS: AT CHICAGO, ILLINOIS:</b></p> <p><b>GEORGE A. BLANEY, Negro Attorney, 2456 South State Street, upon interview informed that he was an attorney as well as a member of the Address Committee for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the offices of this association being just across the hall from those of MR. BLANEY. He informed that during November, 1937, upon receipt of the original complaint in this matter from [REDACTED] he merely relayed the information to the national headquarters of the association at New York City in the absence of the President of the association at Chicago. He stated that he furnished the national headquarters of New York of this Association with a copy of the original letter which [REDACTED]</b></p> </div> </div>			
DO NOT WRITE IN THESE SPACES			
Bureau - 3 Little Rock - 3 Chicago - 2		<b>50-1359-7</b> <b>MAY 18 AM</b> <b>MAY 19 1938</b>	

[REDACTED] BLAKEY was unable to locate his file on this matter, and, accordingly, informed Agent that he could not furnish him with any other information, thereupon suggesting an interview with [REDACTED] BLAKEY stated that in the event he found his file containing a copy of the original of this letter from [REDACTED] he would advise the Chicago Office of this Bureau in order that the file might be made available to an Agent. (b)(7)(D)

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

REFERRED UPON COMPLETION TO OFFICE OF ORIGIN.

Post Office Box 1400  
Little Rock, Arkansas  
May 20, 1938

Director,  
Federal Bureau of Investigation,  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Sir:

Reference is made to your letter dated May 27, 1938  
(60-1359), pertaining to the information contained in a letter directed  
by the Memphis Office to the Bureau dated May 16, 1938, with respect to  
[REDACTED] b7C

Reference is respectfully made to the cases entitled as  
follows:

[REDACTED] "Peonage", Little Rock Origin  
[REDACTED] "Peonage", Little Rock Origin, Bureau File 60-1359  
[REDACTED] "Peonage", Little Rock Origin, Bureau  
File 60-1340 b7C

All of these cases reflect an initial complaint similar  
or identical with that contained in the letter of the Memphis Office dated  
May 16, 1938, and it is particularly noted that that letter reflects the  
lawful conviction of [REDACTED]  
As indicated in the above files, these facts have been presented to the  
United States Attorney at Little Rock, Arkansas, and he has consistently  
advised that so long as the plantation constitutes a regular detention  
farm for prisoners, and so long as prisoners are lawfully charged and  
sentenced in a court of law, they are lawfully detained and there is no  
indication of violation of the Peonage Statute.

It is noted that in the case entitled [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] the plantation owned and operated by [REDACTED] is a  
regular detention farm for St. Francis, Cross and Woodruff Counties, and  
[REDACTED] Arkansas, the point of the alleged offense, is located in  
[REDACTED] Arkansas.

RECORDED 50-1359-8  
It is respectfully requested that this office and the Memphis  
Office be advised whether an investigation is desired in view of the fact  
that the United States Attorney's office holds that these facts, as  
indicated, do not constitute a violation of the Peonage Statute.

Very truly yours,

R. S. FLETCHER,  
Special Agent in Charge.

AIR MAIL - SPECIAL DELIVERY